



ALBERTA

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חג חנוכה שמח **Edmonton Edition**

December 2020



Cover art: White Tree © by Galia Goodman. www.galiagoodman.com
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New cemetery project needs the community's support

By Regan Treewater-Lipes

(AJNews) - Although Edmonton's century-old Jewish Cemetery will still actively bury decedents from the community for at least the next 30 years, preparations are already underway for developing the site of the city's new Jewish cemetery. "You see we still have plots that have been set aside for spouses," explained Marshall Hundert in a recent Zoom interview.

The current cemetery, sitting on just 6 acres has operated for more than 100 years. The new location, an astonishing 30 acres just off Mark Messier Drive, will stand in service of Edmonton's Jewish community for many, many generations to come.

Dave Marcus, Vice-President of the Edmonton Chevra Kadisha explained that: "The land was purchased in 1996, but our development efforts are really gearing up now."

They estimate that the new cemetery will become active sometime in the spring of 2022, "weather permitting, of course," added the group's longest serving member and Pasrt-President, Jerry Cooper. Cooper, who has been a volunteer at the Chevra Kadisha since 1971, trained by Nate Segal and Don Bliss, anticipates that the transition will be a smooth one provided that their fundraising campaign is successful. "Everything will be the same. Nothing is going to be changing – except for location," he noted.

Rob Lederer, the Chevra Kadisha's second longest serving member, elaborated. "We need to discuss the broader perspective here – we have always served the community in a specific way, governed by Jewish law, and this new cemetery is a continuation of this."

In the most recent UJA fundraiser, the new cemetery was included as a bonus campaign. But the group will

soon begin its own independent fundraising in earnest.

"There is a considerable infrastructure that needs to be taken into account, landscaping, clearing roads, fencing, underground utilities creating serenity gardens – many necessary things that people may not realize," Hundert explained. "We want to make sure that there is a similar aesthetic sense connecting the two locations," added Lederer.

In addition, the new cemetery location will need a chapel to house funeral services. While the current chapel seats approximately 120 people, it is hoped that the new building will accommodate upwards of 160. Around a dozen original oak pews from the downtown Chevra Kadisha sanctuary have been in storage for the last several years and will be installed in the new chapel.

"We are really hoping that a family from the community will want to sponsor the building of the new chapel – perhaps in memory of a loved one," said Hundert. "This really is a momentous occasion," added Marcus. "This new site will be active long after we are gone, and will continue to be of service to the community for generations; – contributing to its creation is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

For those concerned with accessibility, Hundert, Lederer, Cooper, and Marcus believe that the new site, 14710-156 Street, is, in fact, closer to the heart of the Jewish community than the current one.

"Let's be honest, most Jews live on the West End, and all you need to do is hop on the Henday," said Hundert. Marcus has vowed to advocate for bike racks, and the city already has plans in the works to maintain regular bus service in the area. "The new cemetery is still in Edmonton, and not as far away as some might think. We searched long and hard for this location – we began looking sometime in the late 80s I'd say," said Cooper.



As Lederer put it: "A Jewish cemetery is an essential part of having an established Jewish community. The first things you need are a school and a cemetery." At present about 2 million dollars have been saved for this undertaking. "This is about being fiscally responsible. We will continue to maintain the grounds and care for the current cemetery once we have transitioned to the new one."

Chevra Kadisha members believe that they will need to raise an additional 1 million dollars to complete the project. "We serve the entire Jewish community – this truly is for everyone."

To donate, visit www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/edmonton-chevra-kadisha or call: 780.482.3065.

Jewish YEG stories online project seeks participants

By Paula Kirman

Jewish Edmonton Stories Online, is a project for Jewish and non-Jewish Edmontonians alike to learn and connect with the stories and places of our community's past, that will launch in the fall of 2021. We are seeking remarkable stories and memories from interested members of Edmonton's Jewish community that connect to a particular place in the City. Stories do not have to be submitted in a complete format. At this point, we're looking for story ideas and summaries. We will follow up

with you once the stories are selected for sharing on our coming interactive storytelling website. Stories will be recorded via audio, video, and/or written transcription via an interview process.

We intend for the stories to represent diversity within the Jewish community, including, but not limited to elders, Sephardim and Mizrahim, women, LGBTQ individuals, and people with disabilities. All recording will be carried out safely with COVID-19 protocols in place. The storyteller will be paid a small honorarium. At this time when we are physically isolated due to COVID-19, it's

important to reach out in as many ways possible to connect and share our community's knowledge, history, and experiences.

This project is being made possible with the support of the Edmonton Heritage Council, JAHSENA, WordsPicturesMusic.com, #YEGFilm, and the Jewish Federation of Edmonton. To share your story, or for more information, feel free to connect with us at stories@jewishedmontonstories.ca. Deadline for stories: March 1, 2021.

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For change of address, please send both old and new addresses. We welcome your stories, pictures, artwork and opinions. Please send submissions to our office at the address above.

Next Deadline: January 7, 2021

The lights of Chanukah will continue to Shine

By Rabbi Ari Drelich

Despite the darkness that prevails at present around the world, the bright lights of Chanukah will continue to shine Bezrat Hashem at the Alberta legislature this year.

On Sunday December 13 at 5:00 PM Chabad will be hosting a short outdoor candle lighting ceremony with our giant menorah which will this year be situated next to the Holocaust memorial adjacent to the ledge building.

In designing this year’s program Chabad was looking for ways to celebrate in a safe and meaningful fashion.

To that end we have decided to combine the ceremony with our annual Car Menorah parade featuring 40 vehicles with Menorahs on top, that will parade through the city and join the ceremony at the Ledge.

As well, this year the event will be broadcast via zoom to accommodate all those who cannot attend. This Zoom link is sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Edmonton to facilitate the entire community’s participation in this event.

For those in attendance we will have prepackaged donuts and Chanukah treats to make the holiday that much more special.




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Come light the giant Menorah in a safe and meaningful way on December 13 at the Legislature Grounds. A zoom link will also be available for those who cannot attend. Pictured above: Chanukah at the Ledge in 2019 (Pre-Covid).

We wish to express our appreciation to the Schayer family for their continued support of Chanukah at the Ledge, as well as the Jewish Federation of Edmonton and

National Council of Jewish woman for their meaningful partnership in bringing Pride in Yiddishkeit to our community.

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Mixing flexibility and stubbornness

By Rabbi Zolly Claman



Rabbi Zolly Claman

It has now been almost three years since my lungs have taken in a breath of Israeli air. I may have been born in Ottawa and live in Edmonton, but my home is Israel.

Why all the nostalgia? It is always during Chanukah that I am reminded of how much I miss it; the *sufganiyot* filled bakeries, the crisp fall air and yes – the lack of the white-bearded man dressed in red that seems to inundate us on this side of the pond.

But really what I miss the most are the *menorahs* that are lit outside every home. There is nothing more beautiful than taking a walk on Jerusalem cobblestone, surrounded by the flickering light of little *menorahs* at each entryway.

Here in the diaspora, where Jews have historically been victims of oppression, the custom has developed to move the candle lighting indoors – but that was not the original design. To this day, in Israel, the original ideal is still practiced, and most people light their menorahs outside, adjacent to their front door.

Next time you are in Israel, take a close look at the precise placement of the *menorahs*. They are placed on the left side of the door. This follows the Talmudic edict to be “surrounded by *Mitzvot*” – the *mezuzah* on the right and the *menorah* on the left.

Is there any significance to which side either of these *mitzvot* are on when one enters or exit the home? These two *mitzvot* represent two opposing ideas. The *mezuzah* is representative of compromise and the *menorah* represents steadfast and unwavering commitment to Jewish values.

Ever wonder why the *mezuzah* is placed on a slant? During the Middle Ages, there emerged an uncertainty as to whether or not the *menorah* should be placed vertically or horizontally – and as a compromise, the tradition is to have it slanted. The *menorah* commemorates a miracle that occurred to a small group of Jews who refused to be washed over in the tide of acculturation and assimilation. It was this group that merited to see the very last open miracle that the Jewish people witnessed.

Getting back to the main topic at hand, with an estimated 90% of the world’s population being right-handed, the right side is considered the dominant side.

When a Jew walks into his or her home, the *mezuzah* is on the dominant right as a subtle reminder to be prepared to compromise and uphold domestic harmony that Judaism holds so precious.

However, as one walks out of the home, the *menorah* is on the dominant right side to signify that we cannot compromise our Jewish values at all when we are out in the big world. We cannot allow ourselves to make ethical lapses that we normally wouldn’t do at home, just to help business go more smoothly. We cannot relax our morals to gain friends or popularity. Every aspect of the moral fiber that is found within the Jewish home must be held high in our societal lives – as a light upon the nations, without even a slight modification or adjustment.

So as a Jew are we meant to be flexible or stubborn? I guess the answer is “yes” – we have to be both. The art of being a Jew is knowing how to embrace both of those qualities.

Chanukah is set at the time of year when the night finally starts getting shorter and the days longer. The darkness dissipates and makes room for the light. In the merit of our being able to walk the fine line between flexibility and stubbornness, may pain and suffering dissipate and make room for joy and happiness.

Rabbi Zolly Claman is the spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Israel in Edmonton.

Still the Season of Giving

By Rabbi Binyomin Halpern



Rabbi Binyomin Halpern

Covid-19 continues to impact us in many ways. One of these is the financial strain that it has had on our province and indeed the world. This has resulted in a focus on cost saving measures as individuals, communities and governments brace themselves for immediate and long-term difficulty. It has also given rise to a new term- ‘pandemic penny pinchers,’ as across the globe people are challenging each other how to make the most of their leftovers or extend the life of their clothing.

While saving money is always a good idea, especially during tough economic times, this trend has highlighted for me something much more solemn and serious.

The Talmud makes the following observation:
דקדוקי עניות

The exactions of poverty,
מעבירין את האדם על דעתו ועל דעת קונו
cause a person to go against his own view, and that of his Creator.

In other words, the confining need to save money when there is not enough to go around, can cause us to do things that are frowned upon, both by Heaven and by our inner selves.

Poverty creates a new mindset; one that is all-encompassing. It presents itself in our everyday questions. Should I treat myself or my family to a special outing? Should I support a local establishment, institution, or tzedaka (charity)? Do I have time today to volunteer? These are now viewed through the unfortunate lens of *dikdukei aniyut*, the exactions of poverty. We simply don’t have the time or the resources, or physical ability to contribute as we once did so freely. We tighten our belts for we must, but inevitably, the danger is that the purse strings of our hearts become tighter along the way.

Chanuka is upon us, a time when traditionally we are extra generous. There is a time-honoured Chanuka tradition of showing our appreciation to those who we benefit from day in and day out, and to cheer on the schoolchildren and schoolteachers, who continue with

great dedication to teach and learn the very Torah that the Maccabees fought and sacrificed for. It is a time when we are used to opening up our homes and Jewish institutions with Chanukah parties to share with each other Hashem’s gifts to us.

What will Chanuka look like this year?

My point is not to bemoan yet again what we are missing. Rather, it is that we should not allow ourselves to get used to this.

A long time ago there was scholar named Rabi Elazar. It so happened that one day Rabi Elazar could not attend the yeshiva. It happens to the best of us, and that could have been the end of the story. But it wasn’t. It really bothered Rabi Elazar that he had missed out. So much so that later, when he met his friend Rabi Asi, he said to him “You know, I wasn’t able to attend today’s learning, but you were there. So please tell me, what did I miss??”

This is the challenge for us all. True we are not living times where it is easy or even realistic to give and share the way we did. Still, we must not forget the truth and the feeling that giving more is still the ideal.

I hope and pray that the time comes very soon that we will have again the resources, financial and otherwise, that will allow us to be generous in the ways that we want to be, and sorely miss.

Malka and I would like to wish the entire community a *lichtige* Chanuka, a holiday that will illuminate and inspire us through the winter.

P.S. It is also important to be generous with ourselves! So, in the meantime, remember to smile and laugh, bringing good cheer to yourself and those around you. (6 feet away!)

Rabbi Binyomin Halpern is Rabbi at the House of Jacob Mikveh Israel in Calgary.

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Camp BB Riback plans for summer 2021

By Maxine Fischbein

(AJNews) - Although COVID-19 put the kibosh on last summer's Camp BB-Riback season, Camp Director Stacy Shaikin says there has been plenty of positive action at the camp which will open registration for summer 2021 this month.

While the trajectory of the pandemic remains uncertain, Shaikin's goal is to get a good forecast of potential camper numbers so that he can staff up for a season that will look a little different than previous ones given the need for stringent COVID precautions.

Camp remains a labour of love for Shaikin, who grew up in Calgary attending what was then the Calgary Hebrew School (now The Calgary Jewish Academy). He spent summers at Camp BB beginning in 1986, and then worked at the camp into his early 20s. His summers at Camp BB spanned the tenures of seven camp directors including his most memorable mentor, Phil Haid.

Shaikin, who previously worked at Enmax, had been considering a career change when the sudden resignation of the previous camp director in spring 2018 paved the way for a "more gratifying" position he could wrap his cap-covered head around.

In previous conversations with friends and camp alumni, Shaikin had found himself thinking "What a great gig it would be to be the summer camp director."

And suddenly he was.

During the first summer season, Shaikin says he leaned heavily on the expertise of long-serving Assistant Director Emily Wolfe and Billy Sky, grandson of the late Bill Meloff. Shaikin also had some family support as his wife Nancy – a community paramedic for AHS – pitched in at the camp infirmary.

Nancy, who was raised outside the Jewish community, was able to look at the camp with fresh eyes.

"She saw that the experience for kids is amazing and that whatever drew my generation to that camp still exists," Shaikin said.

Shaikin, who has always enjoyed roles involving mentorship and leadership, worked hard to get to know his staff prior to that first season, though he was stymied

when sorting out the identities of multiple Rachels and Rebeccas. Then he began again with 218 campers!

It helped that he knew many of the campers' parents and quickly found all kinds of connections with the kids in his care.

Shaikin began to take serious note of the aging infrastructure of the camp. While giving campers a summer to remember, he generated a priority list to improve camp grounds and facilities.

That list included an \$85 thousand replacement of the ropes course, which had hit its 25 year lifecycle, the purchase of pool heaters and the restoration of the Benjamin cabin which had been decommissioned due to deficiencies.

Top of Shaikin's list was the removal of "30 years of junk," that had become part of the camp scenery.

While the prudent decision was made to cancel summer 2020 sessions as COVID-19 cases rose, Pine Lake nevertheless saw a beehive of activity on its shores. Shaikin and rotating crews of bubbled and physically distanced volunteers rolled up their sleeves to take on camp improvement projects. Some 40 youth pitched in, 15 at a time, with reduced mingling to ensure COVID safety.

"It was an unbelievable experience to see these 17, 18, 19, 20 year olds, who were not getting paid, come out and

Camp BB Riback: A family affair



Anat Ovics with her kids: Noah, Eva and Maya Sharon.

By Maxine Fischbein

(AJNews) - Camp BB Riback is a family affair for the Ovics and Sharon clan. The Edmonton family has been affiliated with the camp for two generations and is hoping that COVID-19 can be brought under control by this summer so that Noah (18), Eva (16) and Maya (13) can once again have fun at Pine Lake.

Their Mom, Anat Ovics, recalls her summers as a BB camper and counsellor with fondness. "It was a fantastic opportunity to meet other Jewish kids from all over Alberta," recalls Ovics, who maintains friendships forged at Camp BB.

"When I hear about my kids' experiences at camp I say oh my gosh, I remember Maccabiah . . . I remember buck buck . . . All these traditions still exist for them, so I'm glad that they get to experience that as well."

Ovics was a camper in the 1980s together with current Camp Director Stacy Shaikin, under whose watch Noah, Eva and Maya attended their last two camp seasons.

Continued on page 6

grind for me in whatever role was needed," Shaikin recalls.

Completed and contemplated upgrades at the camp include a new stable fence, deck work at the swimming pool and a refit of the waterfront. Within the next few years Shaikin is planning a new amphitheatre to enhance waterfront activities. "It will be beautiful to have services overlooking the lake," he said.

Fundraising for the pool is a current focus and has already netted a generous \$35 thousand from Calgarians

Continued on page 14

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Our cover artist: Galia Goodman

The stunning art on the cover of this month's *Alberta Jewish News* is by a very talented artist - Galia Goodman, who specializes in Judaica themed images. Entitled *White Tree*, it is a gorgeous multi-media painting that uses delicate papercut, collage and acrylics. The original painting measures 20" x 26". It certainly captures the feeling of Chanukah in Alberta.

Galia is a gifted artist, illustrator and calligrapher whose work is infused with Judaic inspiration and reflects the North Carolina terrain where she lives and other mountain landscapes. Her whimsical image *Little Hanukkah Dreidel* is another example of her beautiful art.

"The creative process is as necessary to me as oxygen," explains Galia. "I understand it as my link to the best part of myself. It connects me to both the spiritual and concrete parts of my life, and without it I would cease to function as a whole person. I see the world in terms of color and light, shadows and darkness. The shapes that flow in and out and around me are part and parcel of the work that I

create."

Galia has created large works and awards for a number of synagogues, churches, colleges and universities, and non-profit organizations. As a self-defined world citizen as well as a strong feminist, environmental activist, supporter of equal rights for all and education for all, and especially for women, she seeks to practice these beliefs.

Galia's art can be viewed at www.galiagoodman.com.

Her art was brought to our attention by Art and Scroll Studio, a Zoominar series featuring artist interviews; each episode is dedicated to promoting creators and makers of Judaica.

On December 2, 2020 at 7 pm MST join Art and Scroll Studio for a conversation with Galia about what informs and inspires her work. It's free but you must register at Evenbrite.ca search Art and Scroll Studio or contact artandscrollstudio@gmail.com.



"Little Hanukkah Dreidel" by Galia Goodman

A family affair *Cont. from page 5*

"I vividly remember what Stacy was like as a camper. When I heard that he was going to be the head of camp I was excited because I couldn't think of a better fit. He's super smart, he's funny, he understands the traditions," Ovics said.

The summer of 2020 was to have been Noah Sharon's second year on the camp staff. He previously served as a counsellor and did a Performing Arts rotation. He'd been looking forward to stepping into the role as Performing Arts Specialist.

"Camp for me has always been a really great experience," says Noah. "It always is the highlight of my summer. . . . As a counsellor it's definitely a different experience than as a camper, but it's just so much fun as a counsellor as well."

Noah was disappointed to miss out on the fun last summer because he had some big plans for the camp's performing arts program. He's hoping that COVID-19 will recede and he'll be able to take on the role of performing arts specialist for summer 2021.

Noah has some impressive credentials as a recent graduate of the Victoria School of Performing and Visual Arts (where his sisters also study) and a first year student at the University of Alberta where he is majoring in drama.

Hooked on Camp BB Riback since her first wonder week

about a decade ago, Eva Sharon – currently in Grade 11 – was to have been a counsellor-in-training last summer and hopes to sign on as first-year staff this summer.

Eva describes the camp as a "very special community" that has enhanced her Jewish identity and allowed her to hang out with friends and meet new people. One of her favourite camp memories is a Leadership Training Program (LTP) trip that featured tenting, river rafting and clanging pots and pans for morning wakeups.

"Camp is a very special community," says Eva. "Not only does it keep you connected to your Jewish identity, but you get to make so many friends. . . .It's just such a special group of people and it's always a lot of fun."

"It was really sad and disappointing," said Eva of the 2020 season's cancellation, her last opportunity to be a camper before transitioning to counsellor.

Maya, who is in Grade 9, also pined for Pine Lake.

"I missed all my friends It's the best part of my summer, just going to camp and hanging out with everybody for three weeks." Maya has attended camp with the same tightly-knit group of girls since kindergarten at the Edmonton Talmud Torah, where she and her siblings attended elementary school.

She speaks animatedly about bunk parties and everyday pleasures like playing cards and just talking with her cabin-mates. Maya's memorable highlights include counsellor-supervised sneak outs.

The Judaic aspects of camp are appreciated by all three of the Sharon siblings. The candlelit Havdalah service

that ends the Sabbath is a cross-generational favourite for the family as is another camp classic – Maccabiah – when teams vie against each other in sports, art and even wacky competitions like bubble gum blowing. Each Maccabiah has a theme with teams named for Jewish heroes. Recent examples were Hollywood superstars Scarlett Johansson and Gal Gadot.

"Even if you lose Maccabiah, it's so much fun," Eva says.

Another highlight for Eva happens on Friday evenings when campers in Grade 7 and up participate in *Sichot* (Hebrew for discussions) ranging from serious topics to goofy ones.

For Maya, Eva and Noah, the camp musical is a beloved tradition. One or more of the sibs have taken part in *Frozen*, *Annie*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Shrek*, *Camp Rock*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Lion King* and a camp-produced musical based on the cartoon *Phineas and Ferb*. Noah played leading roles in *Footloose* and *High School Musical*.

The Sharon siblings are keeping their fingers crossed that it will be safe to go back to Camp BB Riback this summer. They will be relying on the advice of their dad, Dr. Raffi Sharon, a pediatrician who has twice served as the Camp BB Riback physician.

Like many other families, the Ovics and Sharon family have deep roots at Camp BB Riback. COVID-19 may have temporarily taken them out of the camp, but nothing will ever take the camp out of them!

Maxine Fischbein is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter for Alberta Jewish News.



Happy Chanukah

This time of year is meant to be one of bright, warm and happy moments. Wishing you much joy and laughter with your loved ones.



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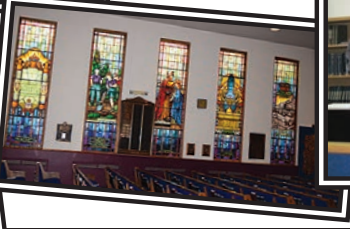





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Places of goodness

By Rabbi Gila Caine

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Rabbi Gila Caine

How good are your tents, Jacob: your dwelling places, Israel

My son sings this verse all afternoon, usually changing “Ma Tovu” (*how good are*) to “Ma Tofu” (*how tofu are*), but he is six years old and his mother is vegetarian, and we enjoy his funny, two-language play on words.

I think of telling him this could be a wonderful Channukah song, but what have our desert tents to do with the defiled Temple (בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ *Beit HaMikdash*) and a bit of oil? That could be confusing for him, but we adults need to deal with confusion.

Channukah is a festival of light in darkness, originating

in the tears of trauma and the filth of death and sin before the oil burned and light shone. Beit HaMikdash had to be purified of idolatry and fanaticism. Our communal home was also tainted by all the pain suffered in years of subjugation and war. It is important to pause and remember this component. Most retellings of the story skim over the crucial cleansing with something like: “They came into the temple, it was in shambles, they cleaned it up,” followed by much detail on the issue of oil.

The festival of Channukah is about placing home at the centre of our existence. The *Beit HaMikdash* is not just “the house of holiness” in Hebrew; it should also be read as “the holiness of the home.” It symbolizes a place where we feel we fully belong, a structure to hold the pure light of our soul (signified by the Menorah, a topic for another time). What has become of our homes after the long months of Covid-19? Many people I meet have been struggling more and more with unemployment or the fear of it, with illness and death, with exhaustion and grief.

For some, the home that used to be a place of rest is now closing in on them, a sphere of loneliness, even for those with family around. But what of those who have not felt human touch in almost a year? For many, home is becoming a complicated place, where physical, spiritual, and emotional *Tumah* (defilement) is creeping in through no fault of our own. This is what happens when the world

goes through illness, pollution, and suffering, so our obligation is to begin by cleansing our own homes.

This year Channukah is calling us to intentionally observe the sacred aspect of our home and to dedicate those eight days to clean our own private *Mikdash*, spiritually and physically. For those of us who have a place to live, Channukah is also a time to be grateful for having a home and to recommitting ourselves to supporting those who do not.

The blessing “*How good are your tents, Jacob: your dwelling places, Israel*” reminds us every morning that we are truly blessed with wonderful dwellings, and that our homes can be places of wonder and goodness. We light the Chanukiah every night for eight nights to remind ourselves, and the world around us, that this is the miracle. Not somewhere else in another time and place, but here now, in our homes, our little *Mikdashim*, where we have the potential to create small circles of beauty, love and kindness. And if we begin the work of purification ourselves, there will be a great light shining out of our windows this winter.

חג חנוכה שמח

Rabbi Gila Caine is the spiritual leader at Temple Beth Ora in Edmonton.

Add some color to your Hanukkah menu

By Elisa Spungen Bildner

(The Noshers via JTA) - These beet pancakes are great for using up a variety of other root vegetables. Using a food processor will make quick work of the shredding aspect of the preparation. With a nice browned crust, the latkes are delicious served with applesauce or sour cream and chives, and offer a good alternative to hash browns at breakfast or brunch.

This recipe is reprinted with permission from *The Berkshires Farm Table Cookbook*, by Elisa Spungen Bildner and Rob Bildner, Countryman Press.

Ingredients

1/4 cup chopped scallions, white and green parts (about 2 large)

1 Tbsp chopped fresh thyme

1 tsp kosher salt, or more to taste

2 cups peeled and shredded red beets (about 11 ounces, 2 to 3 medium beets)

1 cup peeled and shredded carrots (about 6 ounces, 2 to 3 medium carrots)

1 cup peeled and shredded celery root (about 8 ounces, 1/2 small celery root)

1 cup peeled and shredded Idaho or russet potato (about 12 ounces, 1 large potato)

1/4 cup rye or whole wheat flour, or more as needed to hold the raw latkes together

1 cup soft goat cheese (about 5 ounces)

1 large egg, lightly beaten

2 Tbsp neutral oil, such as canola, plus more as needed, for frying

Sour cream and chopped chives, or applesauce for garnish (optional)

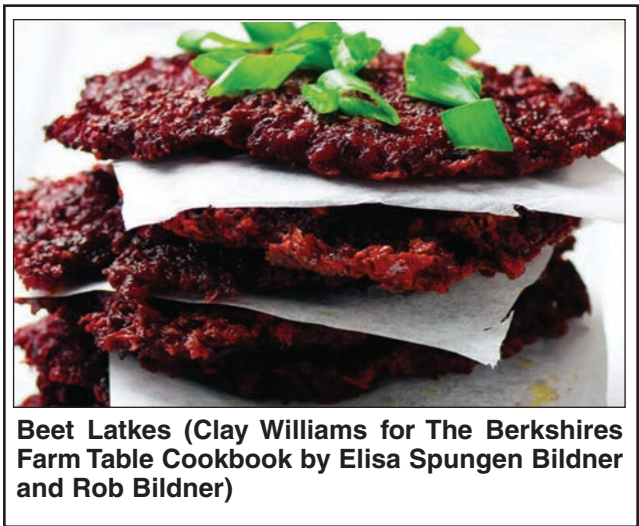
Directions

1) Prepare a plate with layers of paper towels to drain the pancakes.

2) Place the scallions, thyme, salt, beets, carrots, celery root, and potatoes in a large bowl and mix well. Use a paper towel to gently squeeze out any excess moisture. Scatter the flour on top of the shredded vegetables and mix until well incorporated.

3) Combine the cheese and egg in a small bowl. Fold into the vegetable mixture until well coated.

4) Heat the oil in a heavy-bottomed skillet over medium heat until shimmering. Working in batches so as not to crowd the pancakes, use a ¼-cup measure to scoop the vegetable mixture into the skillet. Flatten the mixture gently, using the back of the measuring cup or a spatula, making sure the pancakes do not touch each other. Fry for 4 to 5 minutes on one side, until browned and crisp, and then flip to fry the other side for the same amount of time, or until browned and crisp. Transfer the latkes to the lined plate to drain. Repeat until the entire vegetable mixture has been used. If more oil is needed for frying subsequent batches, add as necessary.



Beet Latkes (Clay Williams for The Berkshires Farm Table Cookbook by Elisa Spungen Bildner and Rob Bildner)

5) Serve the beet latkes warm with sour cream and chives or with applesauce as a garnish.

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Happy Chanukah
from Temple Beth Ora



Children’s books bring new characters into the Hanukkah story

By Penny Schwartz

(JTA) — Move over, Maccabees. This season’s crop of seven new Hanukkah books for kids puts the spotlight on new heroes, from playful llamas to brave and kind knights on horseback.

An eighth book, “*Honey on the Page*,” that shines light on Yiddish children’s stories in new translation, makes a perfect family gift.

Among this year’s highlights is Arthur A. Levine’s “*The Hanukkah Magic of Nate Gadol*,” a superhero story that comes to life with Kevin Hawkes’ sparkling illustrations.

Over the years, as a leading children’s book editor, scores of Hanukkah books crossed Levine’s desk, but many were retellings of the same story. “Only a few writers ... were telling imaginary tales that took Hanukkah as a jumping-off point,” he wrote in an email.

Nate Gadol is the kind of story he longed for, that enhances the cherished Hanukkah traditions with an aura of magic.

This year, as the COVID-19 pandemic prevents families from celebrating Hanukkah with large festive gatherings, round up the cousins on Zoom, light the menorah, nibble on sufganiyot and share in the joy of a new book.

“The Hanukkah Magic of Nate Gadol”

By Arthur A. Levine; illustrated by Kevin Hawkes
Candlewick Press; ages 5-8

Just when the world needs a dose of magic, along comes Nate Gadol, a Jewish mythical superhero who sparks joy for those in need. In Levine’s warm-hearted tale, embellished with Hawkes’ glorious art, the larger-than-life Nate Gadol swoops in to brighten the lives of the Glaser family, poor but kind new immigrants. In the cold winter of 1881 in their urban American apartment, the Glasers stretch what they have to help their neighbors, the O’Malleys. When Hanukkah and Christmas coincide, Nate and Santa help each other out and surprise both families with gifts. The hero’s name is a play on the phrase represented with the four letters on the dreidel, Nes Gadol Haya Sham (“A great miracle happened there”).

“Happy Llamakkah!”

By Laura Gehl; illustrated by Lydia Nichols
Abrams Appleseed; ages 3-5

How does a family of llamas celebrate Hanukkah? With Lllamakah, of course! Laura Gehl’s tender rhyming verse is perfect for cozying up with the endearing little llamas as they light the Hanukkah menorah, play

dreidel and build a snow-llama. Lydia Nichols’ cheerful illustrations brighten the pages.

“Kayla and Kugel’s Happy Hanukkah”

By Ann D. Koffsky
Apples & Honey Press; ages 3 -8

The happy pair of Kayla and her rambunctious dog Kugel are back in Ann Koffsky’s latest title in the delightful series. As Kayla gets ready to celebrate Hanukkah, she and Kugel are searching for the family’s Hanukkah box. In Koffsky’s clear verse, the spunky Kayla explains the origins and traditions of the holiday to Kugel. Koffsky’s color-rich, lively illustrations, including many of the mischievous Kugel, are sure to spark smiles.

“The Littlest Candle: A Hanukkah Story”

By Rabbis Kerry and Jesse Olitzky; illustrated by Jen Kostman
Kalaniot Books; ages 4-8

On the eve of Hanukkah, a box of colorful candles tucked away in a drawer comes to life in this sweet story. While the big candles bicker about who will be chosen to light the first candle on the menorah, the wise candle notices that it’s the littlest, Flicker, who is always helping others. When Flicker is chosen as the shamash, or the helper, the small purplish candle humbly shines in the highest place on the menorah. The book pairs noted Jewish educator Rabbi Kerry Olitzky with his son, Rabbi Jesse Olitzky. Jen Kostman’s cartoon-style illustrations are as colorful as the bright boxes of Hanukkah candles.

“The Eight Knights of Hanukkah”

By Leslie Kimmelman; illustrated by Galia Bernstein
Holiday House; ages 3-8

Hark! In this playful tale, Lady Sadie challenges her eight young knights to save their kingdom’s Hanukkah celebration from a dragon who’s wreaking havoc on the villagers. She sends them out trotting on horseback to make things right with kind deeds and bravery. Kids will chuckle when Sir Isabella and Sir Rugelach discover that behind the dragon’s plume of smoke is a young creature who joins them in the grand Hanukkah celebration. Leslie Kimmelman and Galia Bernstein have created a lively, off-beat story that tickles the funny bone. (Added bonus: the cast of characters are very diverse.)



“There Was a Young Rabbi: A Hanukkah Tale”

By Suzanne Wolf; illustrated by Jeffrey Ebbeler
Kar-Ben; ages 4-8

In this playful, rhyming story, Hanukkah meets “There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly.” On the first night of Hanukkah a rabbi reads from the Torah and lights the menorah. Each night, she adds something new — cooking applesauce, playing dreidel with her family and enjoying chocolate coins. Young kids will join the chorus in this rollicking read-aloud.

“The Ninth Night of Hanukkah”

By Erica S. Perl; illustrated by Shahar Kober
Sterling Children’s Books; ages 3-8

Oy vey. When Max and Rachel move into a new apartment on the first night of Hanukkah, their special Hanukkah box is nowhere to be found. The inventive siblings craft their own menorah and knock on the door of a neighbor who comes to the rescue with birthday candles. For eight nights, a multicultural array of neighbors helps the kids improvise — a hoolah hoop transforms into a perfect dreidel, for instance. As the holiday ends, Max and Rachel invite their new friends to a Hanukkah celebration. Israeli illustrator Shahar Kober’s animated illustrations add to the humor.

“Honey on the Page: A Treasury of Yiddish Children’s Literature”

Edited and translated by Miriam Udel
New York University Press (ages 10-adult)

Miriam Udel, a scholar of German and Jewish studies at Emory University, has gifted the world with a treasure of a book that introduces readers of all ages to the wealth of little-known Jewish children’s stories by more than 25 early 20th century Yiddish writers, including Sholem Asch, Zina Rabinowitz and Mordkhe Spektor. The rich anthology, perfect for reading aloud, is a keeper to return to over the years.

חם חנוכה שמח

Happy Chanukah to the Jewish community



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Happy Chanukah
from
The Slawsky Family

Book review: *The Flight Portfolio*, by Julie Orringer

Reviewed by Maxine Fischbein

(AJNews) - Since it is Jewish book month, and we are well into a pandemic that screams for literary diversion, this is a good time for a great read. One was recently delivered by Julie Orringer, bestselling author of *How to Breathe Underwater* and *The Invisible Bridge*, a sweeping historical saga set in Paris and Budapest during World War II and the Holocaust.

The subject matter of Orringer's most recent novel, *The Flight Portfolio*, came to her attention as she was researching for *The Invisible Bridge* (a novel based, in part, on her grandfather's life). Thankfully she chose to spin it into a novel all its own.

In *The Flight Portfolio*, Orringer tackles the true story of journalist and humanitarian Varian Fry, the first American honoured by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations. Fry is credited with having saved the lives of more than 2,000 Jewish refugees, among them some of Europe's greatest artists and thinkers. During 1940 and 1941 he headed the Marseilles office of the Emergency Rescue Committee, an organization he co-founded with support from American First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and some well-heeled philanthropists including Peggy Guggenheim.

While Orringer's novel is based, in large measure, on Fry's well-documented wartime efforts (researched by the author for some three years before she even began to write), her treatment of Fry's personal life and its nexus with historical events often falls in the realm of imagination.

Fry works feverishly, employing both legal and illegal means to pluck the likes of Russian-French painter Marc Chagall, French author and poet Andre Breton, Hungarian anthropologist Arthur Koestler, German political philosopher Hannah Arendt and German physician, biochemist and Nobel Laureate Otto Meyerhof from the talons of the Nazis and their Vichy collaborators. In the midst of all that, Fry is confronted by the sudden return to his life of Elliott Schiffman Grant (a fictional character), his lover during their Harvard student days.

Fry struggles to stay focussed on the rescue of 200 anti-Nazi and Jewish artists, writers and intellectuals whose works and brain trust will otherwise be lost to the world. Learning of the ERC, more and more refugees line up outside his office to beg for help. Meanwhile, Grant asks Fry for help in finding and extracting the imperilled son of his current lover, Gregor Katznelson (a fictional story line). The flames of Fry's unextinguished passion for Grant are fanned, threatening Fry's previous resignation to an incomplete life with his stateside wife, Eileen.

What emerges and intertwines in Orringer's imaginative telling, is a harrowing rescue story, a love story, an exploration of Fry's internal and external struggles, and a window into the devastating effects of racism and antisemitism both in Europe and in the United States.

Why fictionalize an already amazing story? Orringer says, "A novelist, free to extrapolate, may draw the veil aside." Thus she fills in the blanks left by previous historical, biographical and autobiographical explorations of Fry and his heroic deeds.

Fry published his memoir, *Surrender on Demand*, in 1945, an account that did not reference his sexuality. In *A Quiet American: The Secret War of Varian Fry*, biographer Andy Marino, discusses Fry's homosexuality. The fact that Fry was gay was also acknowledged by Fry's son, James, who set the record straight in a letter to the editor following Cynthia Ozick's review of *The Flight Portfolio* in which Ozick had stated that Fry's homosexuality existed only in the realm of "hunches and hints."

In the same review, Ozick expresses discomfort with Orringer's fictionalization of the Holocaust in a world where the Shoah is receding from memory as Holocaust deniers ply their trade.

While the risks of fictionalizing the Shoah should always be cautiously weighed, one must also take into account the intent of the writer. In *The Flight Portfolio*, Orringer retells the story of Varian Fry with a veracity that was impossible at a time and in a place where coming out of the closet posed tremendous, even existential, threats. The fact that Fry had to cloak his essence led to painful consequences depicted in *The Flight Portfolio* and even more tragic ones in Fry's later years, which fell beyond the novel's scope.

In her novel, Orringer creates a strong sense of place and time, appealing to the senses in often poetic prose, occasionally straying into some purple patches, especially at the beginning of the novel.

Fry emanates from the page convincingly while Grant is a slipperier fish. But perhaps this is not unintentional. Grant is a man with secrets, including one more potentially damaging than his sexuality. It feels authentic that he is opaque.

Orringer shines in her characterizations of some of Fry's clients, colleagues and acquaintances in Marseilles,



including the heiress and socialite Mary Jayne Gold who, in real life as in the novel, flew her own plane between European capitals living it up even in the midst of the conflagration. Connected and irrepressible, she plays a colourful and important role in the rescue work of the ERC both as a philanthropist and volunteer as did ERC staffer Miriam Davenport and Leon Ball, a cowboy from Montana who, until his own disappearance, guides refugees across the Pyrenees toward freedom.

These and other characters often act as Fry's Greek chorus, giving voice to the impossible choices Fry was forced to make while lives hung in the balance.

Fry had everything to lose and nothing to gain in his effort to get endangered Jews out of France before Hitler's Vichy collaborators could turn them over to the Nazis and, ultimately, the ovens of Europe's death camps. His story, though well documented, is surprisingly little-known.

Orringer's timing couldn't be better. At one point in *The Flight Portfolio*, Fry contemplates the things that terrify him including "the idiot dictator shrieking nonsense at the world." If that doesn't resonate in 2020, what does? The daily news reminds us that diseases even deadlier than COVID-19 continue to threaten freedom today.

Fry knew it then; Orringer reminds us now – in a genre that is more accessible and appealing for many readers than history books.

Maxine Fischbein is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter for Alberta Jewish News.

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Memorial Tributes



**Obituary for
Dr. Noel Arran
Jampolsky z”l**
November 22, 1932 –
January 6, 2020

It is with great sadness that the family of Dr. Noel Arran Jampolsky announces his passing on January 6, 2020.

Nov. 22, 1932 – Jan. 6, 2020
We remember him now at the time of his un-veiling (dedication of his headstone) on November 22, 2020, what would have been his 88th birthday. Due to Covid, the un-veiling is restricted to close family and friends. Noel left behind his loving wife of 61 years, Dianne; his children, Valerie (formerly Karen) Jampolsky, Tracy (Michael) Ouchi, and Michelle (Martin) Gerber; his beloved grandchildren, Jordan and Jaden Jampolsky, Maxwell and Malcolm Ouchi, and Liana, Sara, and Rachel Gerber; and his loving sisters-in-law Dolly (Mitchell OB”M) Jampolsky,



**Obituary for
Dr. H. Richard
Uretsky z”l**
May 22, 1946 –
November 9, 2020

It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of Dr. Harvey Richard Uretsky on Monday Nov. 9, 2020, after a courageous

May 22, 1946 – Nov. 9, 2020

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Ruth - Toto (OB”M) (Mort OB”M) Levitt, Bernice (William OB”M) Cohen and Anita (Myer OB”M) Cohen. He was predeceased by his parents, Max and Ann Jampolsky, and his brother, Mitchell Jampolsky; and brothers and sister-in-law Bernie, Clarice, William, and Myer Cohen and Mort Levitt. Noel, aka “Dr. J”, is missed by his many nieces, nephews, and lifelong friends; all of whom he loved to ‘shmooz’ with and readily be a walking, walk-in clinic for. The family would like to thank all his very kind caregivers who supported him during his final years.

Born in Regina and raised in Edmonton from the age of 6. With his brother, Mitchell, he helped with their family business and at the synagogue from a young age. After he completed his Medical Degree at the University of Alberta he went to Galveston, Texas, for 3 years where he completed his Degree in Dermatology. After a brief 4-day courtship, he proposed to the love of his life, Dianne, and they were married in 1959. They raised 3 daughters in Edmonton. During his 47 years of practicing Dermatology in Edmonton, he was President of the Edmonton Talmud Torah School, Chairman of the Edmonton Branch of Boys Town Israel, Chairman of The Edmonton United Jewish Appeal and a Member of the Beth Shalom Synagogue Board. He was honoured by Golda Meir, and Boys Town

battle with pancreatic cancer. He is survived by his wife Pauline, children Jason (Dani), Sari, Aubrey (Lauren), grandchildren Jayden, Aliya, Ethyn, Iyla, Rena, Noah and Blair, siblings Jerry (Elizabeth), Karen Hering (Abe), Trudy Harowitz (Howard), extended family and friends.

Rick was born and raised in St. Catharines Ontario, the second of four children to Abe and Sara Uretsky. Rick moved to Edmonton to attend the University of Alberta, where he met and married Pauline in August of 1968. He completed his medical degree in 1970 and specialized to become an Obstetrician and Gynaecologist in 1974.

Rick practiced medicine for forty-two years both in Edmonton and Jackson, Tennessee. He served as chief of OB/GYN at the Grey Nuns hospital and Chief of Surgery

Israel for his community involvement. Noel also volunteered in many other Jewish and secular organizations and causes.

Noel enjoyed his home in Hawaii for 40+ years, his many lifelong poker groups, travel, gadgets and creating photos, pickles, candles and more to please family, friends and charity causes. Even after practicing Dermatology in Edmonton, he would go to northern Alberta twice a month to give patients access to Dermatology.

He moved to Vancouver in 2007 with his wife, Dianne, to be with their children, grandchildren, family and friends who live there and visited him there.

In his final years, Noel battled Alzheimer’s and Cancer but he maintained his kindness, sense of humour, cultivated his love of music, and grew even more loving and compassionate with each day. Even in illness he maintained the spirit of the words he wrote in 2014: “all of our grandchildren are amazing ... and we are so proud to be a part of their lives. Contentment is a delightful emotion.”

Noel is deeply missed and celebrated by Dianne, his children, grandchildren, family and friends. Condolences may be sent to mmgmimg@gmail.com.

in Jackson. He focused much of his career on treating pregnant patients with diabetes and established protocols for their highest standard of care. He delivered an estimated fifteen thousand babies over his career. Rick was blessed to be able to work along side his son Aubrey for over six years until he retired in 2016.

Family was everything to Rick. He and Pauline celebrated their 52nd anniversary this past August. Their three children and seven grandchildren were his pride and joy. He had a special bond with each family member individually, and these connections will be cherished by each of us forever.

From Israel to Canada: Sonovia Masks
By Brad Chenkis

My father Boris Chenkis is in the fashion industry. He is always fascinated by retail news in other countries. While watching Israel Daily TV he saw an interview with Liat Goldhammer, the CTO of an Israeli startup called Sonovia. She was being interviewed about new fabric finishing technology for textile manufacturing developed at Bar-Ilan University. Liat was explaining the newly developed technology that would repel and kill bacteria located on clothing. The interview Boris would be watching was in early January. The Covid19 effect had not yet become a worldwide pandemic, so my father just listened with interest about this new Israeli startup.

Watching ILTV again on March 18th, Dr. Jason Migdal, a microbio researcher in Israel, discussed how the Sonovia technology mechanically impregnates metal nanoparticles into masks that destroys microorganisms in fabric. This was verified by two independent labs. And it was durable and washable! Now Boris was very interested.

With the Covid virus becoming widespread, Sonovia had positively impacted Israeli doctors and health professionals by providing them with the technologically advanced masks. On May 12th another interview about the Sonovia mask technology took place on ILTV. My father saw an opportunity to get involved. During my father's teenage years he lived in Israel studying and working at kibbutz Rosh Hanikra. With this connection to Israel that never left his heart, he wanted to support an Israeli startup and purchased masks to keep his family, friends and community safe. Soon after this first purchase he received an email from Sonovia to help distribute these masks in Canada. Boris said yes! And



Brad Chenkis displays the Israeli made SonoMasks which are now available in Canada.

the masks were shipped from Habonim street in Ramat Gan to Vancouver!

Boris reached out with excitement to family and friends. Within days he was thrilled to be delivering hundreds of masks and supporting an Israeli company. Nothing could be better. I have now joined my father to distribute Sonovia masks with leading technology to fight against Covid. For more details about the Sonovia mask, please visit sonoviatech.com.

Please contact me at sonoviamaskcanada@gmail.com for any questions about ordering masks in Canada.

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Canadian Magen David Adom laser-focused on fundraising and education

By TheJ.ca Staff

From their home base in Calgary, the western region of Canadian Magen David Adom (CMDA) had a very busy month of October, as a variety of meetings and sessions brought the message of their life-saving work to the Calgary area and beyond.

Magen David Adom (MDA) is Israel's national EMS, blood services, and humanitarian relief organization and a member of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent. MDA is not government funded and relies heavily on donations from around the world to continue saving lives. Every year it responds to over 900,000 calls. Since 1976, Canadian Magen David Adom for Israel (CMDA) has been the sole-authorized fundraising organization in Canada, dedicated to supplying ambulances, medical equipment, supplies and blood-testing kits to support the life-saving efforts of MDA in Israel.

The goal of CMDA is to ensure that supporters are aware of the immediate and urgent needs facing the organization. For instance, with winter coming, MDA needs to be prepared for heavy snowfall, especially in the north of Israel. The equipment needed includes ten new 4x4 ambulances to reach patients in tough terrain and severe weather.

It could be said, that is an 'expected' annual need, as along with an increase in demand, equipment needs to be replaced or upgraded. But this year there was a new need emerging, caused by the pandemic, creating added pressures. MDA launched the "Corona Guardians Program", teaching civilians how the virus works and is transmitted in order to cut off the chain of infections among family, friends, and coworkers.

To ensure maximum effectiveness at halting the spread of COVID-19, youth volunteers are being trained to assist the public by handing out masks, spreading information, and teaching them to take responsible actions to combat the virus. This required the purchase of masks, breathing equipment and products to assist the paramedics.

Western Regional Director Sharon Fraiman tirelessly builds bridges with community groups to create awareness of those needs, and generate goodwill with prospective donors.

"I'm working very hard with Jewish and non-Jewish Organizations, churches, leaders from the community, congregations and volunteers," she said, citing one

example of the Calgary Rotary Club meetup on October 5. "Such an honor for CMDA to be a part of Rotary Club", she wrote to supporters online. "There nothing more important than saving lives around the world."

Another important Alberta event was held with leaders from five churches in the Airdrie area. They came together with Fraiman and paramedic Don Sharpe to learn about and support Canadian Magen David Adom, and to participate in the "First Seven Minute" program. The First 7 Minutes is an educational and training session developed by International physicians. The program highlights those crucial first minutes and what people can do in a medical emergency, before the ambulance arrives, and is especially effective when presented in the context of a potential domestic attack on a civilian target.

Earlier this year, that presentation received a tremendous response in Winnipeg, with 3 dozen lay leaders and members of the community participating including the publisher of *TheJ.ca*, Ron East.

"Basically my region includes the major centres like Calgary, Edmonton, west to Vancouver and Victoria, as well Regina and Winnipeg to the east," Fraiman explained. "Our donors are not only generous in helping ensure MDA can attend to the emergency needs of Israel, they are generous with their time and effort to also promote our cause."

Donors Saul and Ida Alpern of Winnipeg are front and centre this month, with their earmark of \$160,000 to purchase a Mobile Intensive Care Unit, being built in Canada. Orphaned after surviving the Holocaust in Romania, Saul emigrated to Canada and established a business career after marrying Ida, who was born in Edenbridge, Saskatchewan, and moved to Winnipeg as a youngster. She enjoyed a career as the Assistant Director of Dietetics at the Health Sciences Centre before her retirement.

They have a deep personal connection to Israel, as his brother Avrum gave his life in the War of Independence. The Alperns have made donations to CMDA in the past but this is the most significant expenditure, dedicated to Avrum and their family – parents Isaac and Rosa, sister Molly, and brother Shimon - who died in the Shoah. Fraiman noted that another Winnipeg couple have donated two medical scooters, cementing the reputation of the city as the home of philanthropists with big hearts.

On November 8, the Winnipeg chapter held a telethon with hopes of even more success. That evening,



Outreach, education and fundraising are among the key functions provided by CMDA Western Regional Director Sharon Fraiman, pictured with paramedic Don Sharpe.



CMDA participated in the American Friends of Magen David Adom event – "A 90 Year MDA Virtual Celebration." Some of the world's top entertainment and musical talent participated, including Jason Alexander, Gal Gadot, Howie Mandel, Itzhak Perlman and many more.

Visit cmda.org for more information about Canadian Friends of Magen David Adom.

This article was originally published in TheJ.ca



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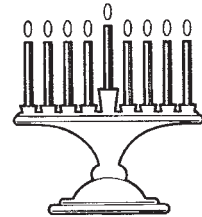
from Mindy Jacobs
& Eoin Kenny



חג חנוכה שמח

from Bluma & Jack Goldberg

Best wishes to our family & friends
for a happy, healthy Chanukah



from Dalia, Allan,
Tammy and
Mark Wolinsky

חג חנוכה שמח

from Shulamit Gil
& Keith Dannacker

Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled
with love, health, and laughter
from Karen Leibovici & Steve Zepp



Happy Chanukah!

from
Susan & Bruce Mintz



ברכות לחג שמח

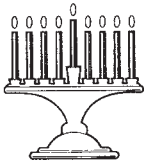
Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled with love,
health, and laughter from Mitchell, Kelly,
Talia and Chaya Goldford



Best wishes to our family and friends
for a happy, healthy Chanukah
from Netta & Frank Phillet

Happy Chanukah!

from Nora & Lawrie Lyman
and family



Wishing everyone a Chanukah
filled with love, health, and laughter
from the Huberman family



*Happy Chanukah
to the entire community*



from the
Steniner Family

Happy Chanukah!

from Jane & Randy Soifer
and family



Happy Chanukah!

from Krista, Robert, Aliyah
and Daniel Brick



Happy Chanukah!

from Jane & Hersh Sobel
and family



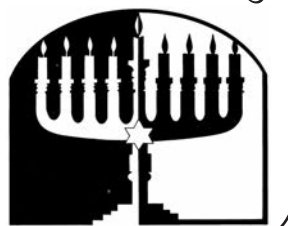
Happy Chanukah!



from
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&
Mark Dolgoy

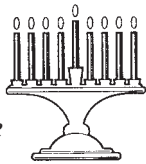
*Happuy Chanukah
to the entire community*

from
Connie &
Danny
Zalmanowitz



חג חנוכה שמח

from
Aubrey and Draytin Rogerville



Wishing everyone a Chanukah
filled with love, health, and laughter
from
Kira, Reed, Hudson and Ford



Best wishes to our friends & family
for a happy, healthy Chanukah
from Jonathan, Zachary
and Gabriella Tankel



Wishing everyone a Chanukah
filled with love, health,
and laughter from
Robin and David Marcus

**Happy Chanukah
to the entire
community**



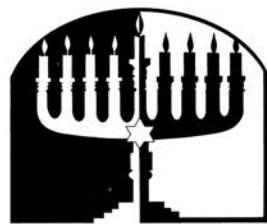
from
Stacey Leavitt
Wright, Erin
Wright, & Jordyn,
Abby and Zoe



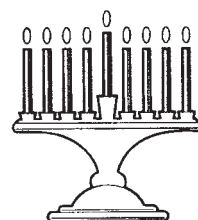
Wishing everyone a Chanukah
filled with love, health,
and laughter
from Luba Allen

Happy Chanukah!

from
Michele
&
Josh Miller



חנוכה שמח

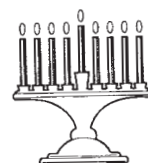


from
Anna, Forrest,
Adina and
Naomi Zeisler



Wishing everyone a Chanukah
filled with love, health,
and laughter from Jennifer, Colin,
Asher and Zachary Muscat

Best wishes to our family and friends
for a happy, healthy Chanukah
from
the Litman family



Wishing everyone a Chanukah
filled with love, health, and laughter
from the Buschewsky family



Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled with love, health, and laughter from Marina, Gary, and Matthew Marcus and Luba Kalaminski



Best wishes to our family and friends for a happy, healthy Chanukah from the Bass / Haines family



Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled with love, health, and laughter from Tulane and family

חג חנוכה שמח from Faren Hochman and Ari & Noam Sniderman

Best wishes to our family & friends for a happy, healthy Chanukah from Terri, Brian and Adina Mann



Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled with love, health, and laughter from Francie & Jon Nobleman and family

חנוכה שמח Chanukah Sameach from Gabe, Megan, Dani, and Nes Mandel

Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled with love, health & laughter from Arlene Hoffamn Chetner & family



Best wishes to our family and friends for a happy, healthy Chanukah from Heidi, Clive, Max, and Sam Oshry



Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled with love, health, and laughter from Carol & Ron Ritch



חנוכה שמח from Lemoire Alima, Grant Vogel & Nathaniel, and Ellie



Happy Chanukah! from Sharon Bookhalter & Jerry Glasser

Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled with love, health, and laughter from Marilyn, Murray and Seth Glick

Best wishes to our family & friends for a happy, healthy Chanukah from Lily & Henri Cynamon



Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled with love, health & laughter from Angela, Lonnie, Emma, Zoe, Ethan and Jonah Zwaigenbaum



Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled with love, health & laughter from Allan, Steven and Syma Mann



חג חנוכה שמח from Judi Card

Wishing everyone a Chanukah filled with love, health, and laughter from the Agronin family

The Aviv Israeli Folk Dance Association thanks the Edmonton Jewish Community and the Alberta Jewish News for supporting this fundraising project. Wishing everyone a happy and healthy Chanukah celebration!

Irwin Cotler named as Canada’s first envoy in anti-Semitism fight

(JTA) - Irwin Cotler, a former Canadian justice minister and a human rights activist, is Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s choice as his nation’s first envoy to combat anti-Semitism.

Cotler, a lawyer who belongs to Trudeau’s Liberal Party, has long been a leading figure in human rights advocacy. He has worked for a number of prisoners of conscience including Nelson Mandela, who went on to lead South Africa; Andrei Sakharov, the Soviet dissident leader; Natan Sharansky, the prisoner in a Soviet gulag who went on to become an Israeli Cabinet minister and the chairman of the Jewish Agency for Israel; and Jacobo Timerman, the Jewish author and one-time prisoner of the Argentine junta.

He has also served as a Parliament member for a Montreal district.

“As Canada’s first Special Envoy on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism, Irwin Cotler will use his vast knowledge and experience to promote Holocaust education, remembrance, and research as we continue working with partners in Canada and around the world to fight against hate and intolerance,”

Trudeau said in a statement on November 25. “Because antisemitism has no place in Canada – or anywhere else.”

The statement said Cotler would work with government ministers to inform on policy and programming.

The Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) applauded the move.

“We applaud the appointment of the Honourable Irwin Cotler as Canada’s first Special Envoy for Promoting Holocaust Remembrance and Combating Antisemitism. In this capacity, Mr. Cotler will lead the Canadian delegation to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. Anti-Jewish racism is a cancer, and there is no one more qualified than Mr. Cotler to lead the fight against it on Canada’s behalf on the international stage,” said Jeffrey R. Rosenthal, Co-Chair, CIJA Board of Directors

“Mr. Cotler is a Canadian icon who has been tirelessly advocating for human rights for decades. Canada has demonstrated leadership by creating the position of special envoy, in discussion for months, and we are pleased Mr. Cotler was chosen to fill this important role,” added Joel Reitman, Co-Chair, CIJA Board of Directors.

Former MP Irwin Cotler will assume the post of Special Envoy on Preserving Holocaust Remembrance and Combatting Antisemitism in Canada.



from Deb Shatz, Dan Moser, Regan Treewater-Lipes, Maxine Fischbein and Jeremy Appel at



Thank you for welcoming us into your homes each month.

ALBERTA Jewish News

Camp BB Riback plans

Cont. from page 5

Faigel and Lenny Shapiro. Another large gift from the Sam Ousher Switzer Charitable Foundation is devoted to supporting the construction of a new dock.

Plans are also in place to redo the camp office, an initiative supported by the Oshry family in Edmonton.

Other upgrades will include refurbishing of cabins and the purchase of new bunkbeds. Shaikin is in conversation with donors interested in supporting cabin upgrades at a cost of \$12,500 per cabin.

The volunteer team that worked on restoring the Benjamin Cabin this past summer will be rolling up their sleeves next season to take down an old changing room and build the waterfront deck.

Shaikin, who takes pride in the achievements of everyone around him, has particular praise for the camp's dedicated board of directors including co-chairs Ronnie Ploit and Cory Krygier, an architect Shaikin describes as the "facilities wizard."

While a safe and comfortable camp environment is paramount, every bit as important is the programming that engages and inspires campers.

The recent appointment of a Judaic committee including rabbinical students Ilana Krygier Lapidés and Lara Rodin and camp alumna and staffer Megan Raber, bodes well for the enhancement of Jewish programming once the camp can reopen.

"They understand the culture and are looking at what we have to tweak to add a more Jewish element," said Shaikin.

Being a mensch is a good start, but it isn't enough, added Shaikin who wants to beef up the Judaic aspects of the camp newsletter and to provide online Havdalah services at intervals throughout the year.

"I want [campers] to come away with respect and pride in who they are," says Shaikin. "We are a Jewish camp and we have to encourage [Jewish] values."

High on that list is inclusion and Shaikin is continuing the Camp's long-standing commitment to serving campers with special needs. With the help of Calgary Jewish Federation Inclusion Manager Karina Szulc, the camp has partnered with Between Friends, a vital community resource that does pre-camp sessions with staff – including a dedicated inclusion team – to help ensure that all kids can "...have the summer they deserve," says Shaikin. The camp has put a library in one of the cabins for quiet time, an especially important support for kids prone to sensory overload.

COVID has caused a bruising economic burden for summer camps. Shaikin and the Camp board of directors



Camp BB-Riback is a labour of love for Director Stacy Shaikin and his family.



A dedicated group of volunteers worked to maintain camp this past summer.

responded to the challenge by launching an emergency campaign, renting accommodations to families, conducting retreats and applying for every possible grant in order "to keep the lights on" last summer, Shaikin said.

The camp is closing in on their \$300,000 goal for COVID relief thanks to grants from the Alberta Government, Calgary Jewish Federation, Edmonton Jewish Federation, Edmonton Jewish Foundation and Calgary B'nai Brith Lodge #816. A number of parents donated what would have been their children's 2020 camp fees while others applied those fees to the 2021 season. If other recently-applied-for grants materialize, the camp will be within \$10,000 of their emergency campaign goal, Shaikin says.

All of that – and the largesse of countless generous individuals and community organizations since the camp opened in the 1950s – have been wise investments.

"This camp is a breeding ground for leadership," says Shaikin who is proud of the fact that camp alumni currently head major community organizations in both Calgary and Edmonton. Examples include Jewish Federation of Edmonton Chair Steven Shafir, Calgary Jewish Federation Co-Chairs Jordan Balaban and Jared Shore, Alberta Jewish News Editor Dan Moser and newly-minted Calgary B'nai Brith Lodge #816 President Darren Bondar, himself a previous Camp Director. Many other current and former community leaders "cut their teeth at Camp BB," Shaikin said.

While planning for summer 2021, Shaikin is working on raising endowment gifts and growing an operations reserve fund so as to ensure stability of the camp for future generations of campers. Camp BB Riback is one of 10 Calgary Jewish organizations that have partnered with Calgary Jewish Federation and the Jewish Community Foundation of Calgary to raise after-lifetime gifts through the Harold Grinspoon Foundation's LIFE & LEGACY program.

While Shaikin says he didn't sign up for fundraising, he is grooving to the challenge and is looking forward to taking a cultural philanthropy course through JCAMP 180. Another initiative of the Massachusetts-based Harold Grinspoon Foundation, JCAMP 180 provides matching

grants which, together with other initiatives, will help the camp to upgrade, "...so we can become what we're supposed to be," Shaikin said.

"This camp is a gem. It needs to be taken care of like a child," added Shaikin.

A father of two, Shaikin brings parental passion to the care and nurturing of all his campers – a calling that now requires even more attention to safety and health, given the pandemic.

"We are trying to stay agile when it comes to the virus," says Shaikin as he prepares to open camper registration.

December will see a flurry of Zoom meetings during which Shaikin will meet with staff, camper cohorts and parents. In addition to speaking with the camp family in Alberta, he looks forward to reengaging members of the Saskatchewan Jewish community.

"Saskatchewan was a huge part of the camp while I was there," said Shaikin. "We can help them and they can help us."

In addition to imparting important information about the camp – particularly in light of COVID – Shaikin looks forward to listening to parents, campers and staff and helping to actualize their hopes and aspirations for summer 2021.

Senior campers who were to have ascended into the Leadership Training Program (LTP) and those who were to have served as Counsellors-in-Training (CITs) last summer are hoping that some of the highlights they missed are recoverable. Shaikin is working on the blend and has plans to move Wonder Week (one week sessions designed to acclimate younger campers) to the second camp session in August when there is less action and a better opportunity to enhance their experience.

Let's hope that the timing will be right for campers to once again put on their blue and white sweaters, the dirtier the better, and pass through the gates of Camp BB Riback for a safe and fun summer of '21!

Maxine Fischbein is a Local Journalism Initiative Reporter for Alberta Jewish News.

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This month's update from Edmonton Talmud Torah School



It's been a very busy month at Talmud Torah School. The Kindergarten students are learning their alphabets and having fun at the same time. When they are done with their desk work they head to the gym.



**EXTRA! EXTRA!
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The Edmonton Jewish Community Directory is coming back!!

After many requests from our Edmonton Jewish community members, the Edmonton Talmud Torah is looking forward to publishing a community directory in the spring of 2021.



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Email: edmontonjewishdirectory@gmail.com







EDMONTON TALMUD TORAH SOCIETY
תלמוד תורה כנגד כולם

Edmonton Talmud Torah Society

Special Announcement - November 2020


The Edmonton Talmud Torah Society is excited to announce that we are undertaking a new strategic planning process. The purpose of this process is to develop a new clarity of direction to support the Society's ability to serve its families and the Edmonton Jewish Community, both now and for generations to come. As part of this process we will be working to increase communication and engagement with the greater Edmonton Jewish Community.

The strategic planning process will be broken into four phases:

 INFORM	This phase includes both the initial information gathering process, as well as informing our stakeholders of this new project
 CONSIDER	This phase will involve validation of ideas, priorities and values that will be included in the strategic plan. Groups engaged will be the TT board, TT staff, TT parents, and the greater TT community
 STRATEGIZE	This phase will see the creation of the strategic plan
 COMMIT	This final phase will be the actioning of the strategic plan through the setting of annual targets and measures to evaluate progress

Our next communication will outline in further detail the expected steps under these phases. We look forward to engaging further with the community as we move through this journey.

Happy Chanukah!
חנוכה שמח!



EDMONTON TALMUD TORAH SOCIETY
תלמוד תורה כנגד כולם

A little synagogue in the land of pagodas

By Maxine Fischbein

(AJNews) - A beautiful synagogue amidst mosques and Hindu temples in a city most famous for its shimmering pagodas, Musmeah Yeshua is the most notable reminder of the vibrant Jewish life that once existed in Rangoon, Burma (now Yangon, Myanmar).

Our arrival in Yangon at the tail end of January, 2020 fulfilled a dream. Our family had lived in Malaysia for a remarkable year in the mid-1990s and travelled extensively there and in Thailand. Burma then languished under martial law and it would be many years until we could take a boat ride on the Irrawaddy or travel the poetry-inspiring road to Mandalay.

As we packed for the long-anticipated adventure, my husband and I felt anxiety too. We had routed our flights so as to avoid mainland China. Canadians Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig were already victims of Beijing's rage over the detention of Huawei's Chief Financial Officer Meng Wanzhou, making our Canadian passports potential liabilities.

Meanwhile, a mysterious virus said to have originated in a wet market in Wuhan, China was spreading, though the devastating COVID-19 pandemic had not yet been declared.

We took a deep breath, packed some face masks and flew through Hong Kong toward a remarkable adventure that began, counterintuitively, in Myanmar's only remaining Synagogue.

While researching for our trip, I had come across a company called Myanmar Shalom. At first I figured that some enterprising Israeli had found a way to capitalize upon the wanderlust of post-army Israeli youth.

I was mistaken. Myanmar Shalom is owned by Sammy Samuels, the fourth generation 30-something patriarch of the dwindling Jewish community in Yangon. A graduate of Yeshiva University in New York, Sammy is keeping the doors of Musmeah Yeshua open, as his late father Moses once did, so that Jewish visitors can be greeted and services held when a minyan materializes.

Arriving in Yangon several days ahead of our four-country tour of Southeast Asia, we took a Myanmar Shalom day tour featuring the Jewish sites of Yangon.

Our guide, Soe Yee, picks us up in front of the Chatrrium Royal Lake Hotel wearing his traditional Longyi, an ankle-length sarong that provides blessed ventilation in the smothering heat blanketing Yangon even in the early morning hours.

We drive past the shimmering Shwedagon Pagoda (which we explore in amazement later in our stay) – and head toward the centre of town with its picturesque collection of colonial period buildings established after the British colonized Burma in 1885.

Soe Yee – who is not Jewish – points with pride and respect to the multiculturalism evident in Yangon's bustling centre. The street once known as Judah Ezekiel Street is home to a Sikh Temple and a Salvation Army Church. Similarly, at the town centre, pagodas, temples and mosques co-exist in seeming peace – belying a long history of ethnic strife in Southeast Asia's largest country, most recently manifested in the persecution and murder of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar's north.

We waded into the Indian Town area, a riot of shops and



A view of the exquisite interior of the Musmeah Yeshua Synagogue in Yangon, Myanmar. (Photo courtesy Milt Fischbein)



A street shot of the Musmeah Yeshua Synagogue in Yangon, Myanmar. It ranks 3rd on Trip Advisor's top things to see in Yangon. (Photo courtesy Milt Fischbein)

A short walk away, on Pansodan Road, we explore the Sofaer Building (now known as the Lokanat building), a four-story Italianate building designed by renowned architect Thomas Swales and built by Isaac Sofaer in 1906. The Sofaer family, prominent Baghdadi Jews, had amassed their fortune importing wines and spirits, exporting rice and supplying oilmen.

David Sofaer served as Yangon's mayor in the 1930s. Abraham Sofaer eventually made his way from Burma to England and then Hollywood, building a career as a stage and screen actor.

It would be an understatement to say that the Sofaer building – which once housed such tenants as the Bank of Burma, Reuters and the Vienna Cafe – has seen better days. While some of the street-level spaces have been reclaimed and renovated, a cautious trip upstairs brings us to the rusting cage of a mangled elevator and the depressing view of a courtyard filled with garbage. Still, the former glory of the building remains evident in its spectacular yellow façade and original floor tiles imported from England.

Just a short stroll away, we make our way to the Secretariat – the massive former headquarters of British Burma and the site of Aung San’s assassination in 1947.

On the East side of the Secretariat runs Thien Phyu Road, formerly known as Judah Ezekiel Street – named for the early Jewish immigrant to Burma who, together with his brother, arrived in the mid-1800s. They worked for King Mindon – the penultimate King of Burma – as bookkeepers. A Moldavian Jew, Jonas Goldenberg, who made his fortune in logging, was also close to King Mindon's court. A century earlier, the first recorded Jew in Burma was Solomon Gabirol, from India, who served in the army of King Alaungpaya.

After exploring other Yangon sites including the colonial-era Post office, Custom House and storied Strand Hotel, Soe Yee takes us to the old Jewish cemetery, some six miles away. The cemetery – located in the midst of a very poor neighbourhood – has more than 600 graves.

Those laid to rest once enjoyed a vibrant Jewish life in Rangoon that included two Synagogues. The second, Beth El, established in 1932, disappeared with the exodus of Jews from Burma during World War II. The last Rabbi to serve the Yangon Jewish community left in 1969. A Jewish school established in 1910 behind the famous Scott Market is said to have educated 200 Jewish children at its height. With the exception of Musmeah Yeshua, these institutions were laid to their eternal rest many years ago.

The condition of the cemetery – from the crumbling of matzevot to the overgrowth of weeds— is dismal and its future uncertain given government plans for urban renewal.

According to Sammy Samuels, a new cemetery has opened in recent years, about an hour and a half's drive away. That is where Moses Samuels is buried – ironically at a distance from the deeply-rooted community he worked so hard to hold together.

Like his father, grandfather and great-grandfather before him, Sammy labours to keep the light of Judaism

Continued on page 17

kosher

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We stroll past the Sule Pagoda to the Mahabandoola Garden where we gaze at City Hall, an extraordinary fusion of Colonial and Burmese architecture, built in 1925. We are standing where massive protests took place in 1988, following yet another military coup and the house arrest of pro-Democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi.



*Wishing a happy and healthy Chanukah
to the Jewish Community, from*

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A little synagogue

Cont. from page 16

shining in Yangon where a once prosperous community contributed disproportionately to civic life and philanthropy. In a country of 54,000,000, with a remaining Jewish community of 20 (swelling to 70 or 80 if you count the pre-COVID community of Jewish expats), the effort seems in need of a miracle.

Yet, in a city full of spectacular religious and secular sites, the Musmeah Yeshua Synagogue holds the #3 spot on Trip Advisor's 149 things to do in Yangon.

Jewish travellers, finding invitations posted at their

hotels, have found their way there for Passover Seders and, since 2011, Sammy Samuels – whose Bar Mitzvah and wedding were the last to be held there – has invited some 200 travellers, government officials and representatives of other religions and ethnicities to join his tiny community in lighting the menorah and celebrating the miracle of Chanukah.

Sadly, Yangon is in need of miracles. A second wave of COVID-19 has hit hard. The Synagogue, like other religious and tourist sites, has been forced to close its doors until the contagion subsides. It is the least of Yangon's challenges. Reuters recently reported that some citizens, their livelihoods decimated due to the pandemic, are trapping snakes and rats as food sources.

Fortunately, the Samuels family remains well.

"We need to be resilient and hope for the post-COVID bounce in tourism," Sammy Samuels says.

Last February, during better times, we took our reluctant leave of Yangon, moving on to adventures elsewhere in Myanmar and beyond. We soared in a hot air balloon above thousands of ancient pagodas in Bagan, Myanmar and marvelled at the breathtaking ruins of Angkor Wat in Cambodia. Every bit as wondrous as those ancient sites is the small but mighty remnant that fans the flickering flame of Judaism in the land of pagodas.

Maxine Fischbein is a Local Journalist Initiative Reporter for Alberta Jewish News.

Chanukah: A Secular/Religious Festival for the Ages

By Rabbi Mark Glickman



Rabbi Mark Glickman

To the rabbis of the *Talmud*, Chanukah seems to have been in a category of its own. Unlike other holidays, they don't seem to understand it very well at first. When those rabbis began discussing Shabbat, for example, or Yom Kippur or Pesach, they just dove right into the nature of the celebrations and rituals. But Chanukah was different. With this holiday, the rabbis opened their Talmudic discussion by asking "Mai – what is – Chanukah?" These sages, so learned in all things Jewish, almost seemed puzzled by this celebration. "We know what Sukkot is," they seemed to suggest, "and we're clear on Rosh Hashanah. But Chanukah? What is this thing?"

One of the reasons for their confusion, I think, is that Chanukah has always been the subject of a push-pull tension between secularism and religion. Historians tell us that it started out as a purely military celebration, a festive salute to the heroism and soldierly prowess of the Maccabees in their victory over the Greeks. The story of the little jar of oil and of G-d's miraculous intervention only came along about six centuries later, during Talmudic times. It seems that the Jews of those later eras, living as they did at the whim of other ruling authorities, came to realize that a holiday celebrating a time when Jews gave a

military whupping to their own ruling authorities was somewhat impolitic.

The Jews of these later times, in other words, took what had been a secular military holiday and transformed it into a religious one. Now, Chanukah would celebrate divine marvels rather than just human achievement. Now, the purpose of the festival would be *pirsum hanes* – public proclamation of the G-d's miracle – rather than just waving military standards.

That tension between Chanukah as a religious festival and Chanukah as a secular one continues today. Every Chanukah, Jews around the world light chanukkiyot – Chanukah menorahs – in their homes, the flames shining out their windows to share the miracles that we remember. Similarly, we spin dreidles, eat oily foods, and sing songs, all of which invoke memory of the miraculous nature of that little jar of oil first mentioned in the Talmud.

At the same time, Chanukah is also experiencing the pull of the secular. Retailers have Chanukah sales; delis offer Chanukah specials; and the greeting card and wrapping paper aisles in many stores feature Chanukah sections so that they too can cash in on the festival.

Additionally, some Jewish organizations secularize the holiday, too. They conduct Chanukah candle lightings in shopping malls and town squares – places where, say, conducting a Catholic mass would be unthinkable. Religious observances often have no place in the North American public square – Chanukah only gets there because some of us are willing to secularize it.

So, what is Chanukah? It's all of these things. It's a secular festival of gifts, games and yummy, high cholesterol foods, and it's a religious celebration calling us to focus on the awesome power of G-d's miracles. It's a holiday in which we rejoice in the courage and military might of our

ancestors, and it's one whose Haftarah comes from Zechariah (4:6) – "It is not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, says Adonai of hosts."

This Chanukah, of course, will be an unusual one for us all. As I write these words, Covid-19 rates are soaring here in Alberta, and as long as these rates continue, it will be irresponsible for us to hang out for very long in the public square. As a result, this year we won't be spending as much time at the sales and in the malls and at the town-square candle lightings. To do so would be an irresponsible rejection of *pikuach nefesh* – our tradition's call to protect human life at almost any cost.

But we will be able to be at home this year. We will be able to sing our Chanukah songs, light our Chanukiot, and place them in the window as a proclamation of G-d's greatness. These aspects of our tradition need not be given up, even during these difficult days.

Pandemics, in other words, make secular celebrations difficult, because those celebrations often occur in the public square. But they still leave open the rich religious traditions of this holiday.

May this Chanukah be one of safety and health for us all. And, as always, may it be a time of warmth, togetherness, and shared joy in the many miracles that enriched our lives then just as they do now.

Chag Sameach!

Rabbi Mark Glickman is Rabbi at Temple B'nai Tikvah in Calgary.



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2021 Grammy Awards: All the Jewish nominees

By Emily Burack

(JTA) — This year’s Grammy Awards will almost certainly be different from past years, thanks to the coronavirus pandemic. But despite the lack of details surrounding the ceremony, it’s still taking place, and as usual, several Jewish artists made the nominations list, which was announced Tuesday.

Ranging all the way from the sister rock band Haim to comedian Tiffany Haddish, these are the Jewish artists who made the biggest impact on the recording industry this year.

Leading the way are the Jewish Haim sisters — Alana, Danielle, and Este — who are nominated for album of the year for “Women in Music Pt. III,” and for best rock performance for their song “The Steps.” The album, which is their third, was released in June to rave reviews.

Jack Antonoff — the Jewish musician who has become a go-to producer for some of the industry’s biggest pop stars and often wears a Star of David in public — is up for producer of the year, for his recent work with Taylor Swift, The Chicks (formerly the Dixie Chicks), FKA Twigs and Sia. He received another nod for his work on Taylor Swift’s album “folklore.”

Also nominated for producer of the year is Jewish musician Dan Auerbach, the frontman for the rock band The Black Keys, for his work on music by CeeLo Green, Early James, Marcus King and others. His father is of Polish Jewish heritage.

Breakout Jewish rapper Doja Cat (real name Amalaratna Zandile Dlamini) had a standout 2020 after going viral on TikTok and is nominated for best new artist. Her hit song “Say So” also received nominations for record of the year and best solo pop performance. She was born to a Jewish mother and non-Jewish South African father in California.

Daniel Maman, better known by his professional moniker The Alchemist, shares a nomination for best rap album with Freddie Gibbs for their record “Alfredo.”

The prominent hip-hop producer, who has worked with dozens of rappers, from Eminem to 50 Cent, has a father with Israeli heritage.

And singer J.P. Saxe shares a nomination for song of the year along with Julia Michaels for their hit ballad “If the World Was Ending.” Saxe’s grandfather was Janos Starker, a renowned Grammy-winning cellist and Hungarian Holocaust survivor.

Two Jewish comedians are up for best comedy album: Jerry Seinfeld for “23 Hours to Kill” and Tiffany Haddish for “Black Mitzvah.” Haddish celebrated her bat mitzvah on the same day the Netflix special premiered.

“When I came up with the concept for my special,” Haddish explained to Alma, “I was trying to figure out a way to tell my truth, my experiences in life, and also maybe open other people’s eyes to the fact that in African American culture, there is nothing that says, ‘Okay, you’re officially a woman,’ or, ‘You’re officially a man.’ There’s no ceremony. There’s no rite of passage.”

Stephen Schwartz’s West End adaptation of “The Prince of Egypt” received a nod for best musical theater album. The recording was released shortly before Passover, fitting for a production that tells the tale of Moses and the Exodus story.

“A lot of times you put stuff out there and don’t know how it’s being received. So if people have found something inspiring or comforting, there’s just no greater gift a writer can ask for,” Schwartz told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

Schwartz will be competing against a Jewish superstar pair: Alan Menken and Howard Ashman. The new off-Broadway cast recording of composer Menken and lyricist Ashman’s “Little Shop of Horrors” was also recognized in the musical category. The two of them also worked on “The Little Mermaid,” “Beauty and the Beast” and “Aladdin.” Ashman passed away in 1991 at age 40.

In the film soundtrack category, Jewish composer Thomas Newman received a nomination for his score for “1917.” If he wins, this would be Newman’s seventh Grammy. “Jojo Rabbit,” the Taika Waititi-led Holocaust satire, received a nomination in best compilation soundtrack.

For best music film, Spike Jonze’s “Beastie Boys Story” received a nomination. It’s a documentary that premiered on Apple TV earlier this year telling the tale of the pioneering rap group — whose three members were all Jewish. Jonze, known for directing the movies “Her” and



Jack Antonoff and Doja Cat

“Where the Wild Things Are,” is also Jewish.

And while superstar Beyoncé is not Jewish her visual film “Black Is King,” which adapts the story of Moses, also received a nomination in that category.

Nominated for best classical compendium is an orchestral adaptation of “The Diary of Anne Frank,” narrated by Isabel Leonard and conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas for the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. Thomas produced the work back in 1990 with the help of Audrey Hepburn, who originally read Frank’s words in performance.

Israeli cellist Matt Haimovitz is also in this classical compendium category, for “Woolf, L.P.: Fire And Flood.” His last nomination was a decade ago, in 2010.

Black Jewish rapper Drake added three Grammy nominations to his long list of accolades — for best music video, for the accompaniment to the track “Life Is Good,” and for best melodic rap performance and best rap song for “Laugh Now, Cry Later.”

Leonard Cohen, who passed away in 2016, received a posthumous nomination for best folk album for “Thanks for the Dance.” The record, his fifteenth and final studio album, was finished by Cohen’s son Adam.

And Joanie Leeds’ “All the Ladies” is up for best children’s album.

The Grammys are set to air on Jan. 31 on CBS, hosted by Trevor Noah of “The Daily Show.”

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Happy Herod's Day

by Eliezer Segal

The first-century C.E. Latin satirist Persius Flaccus devoted one of his poems to the theme that even persons who are ostensibly free will often enslave themselves to follies of their own making. A blatant example was the inclination to pursue silly superstitions, as exemplified by the widespread popularity of bizarre Jewish customs. A case in point: “When the Day of Herod comes round,... the lamps wreathed with violets and ranged round the greasy window-sills emit their thick clouds of smoke.”

Was Persius describing a particular Jewish practice, or was he merely rehashing a hodgepodge of stereotypical customs that had come to be associated with the Jews of Rome? The Jewish calendar contains no “Day of Herod,” nor is it likely that they would bestow such an honour on the infamous tyrant. On the other hand, Herod the Great was world-renowned as ruler of Judea, and it is conceivable that outsiders would treat his name as a generic identifier of the Jewish nation. Christian texts refer to his grandson, Persius’ contemporary, as “Herod Agrippa.”

For modern readers it might appear more plausible to associate Persius’ festive lamps with Shabbat, particularly as he goes on to mock the Jews’ consumption of fish—long recognized as a Sabbath delicacy—and mumbling incomprehensible prayers. We should bear in mind, however, that in ancient pre-electric times the kindling of candles had not yet become a recognizable ritual, but served primarily to provide illumination; hence its association with the day of rest would not have been obvious to Persius or his contemporaries.

Persius’s verses have provoked considerable debate among historians. Some propose that Herod like other ancient potentates, instituted a holiday to celebrate his birthday or the beginning of his reign.

Among the scholars who have weighed in on this question, a surprising number have tried to identify Herod’s Day as Hanukkah. More than the Sabbath, that holiday was marked from an early time as the “feast of light.” Persius’s contemporary Josephus Flavius was the first to designate Hanukkah in that way, suggesting that it symbolized how the Jews’ right to worship was “brought to light.”

At first sight this thesis sounds patently absurd. After all, Herod was the implacable foe of the Hasmonean

dynasty whose exploits are celebrated on Hanukkah. He was haunted throughout his reign by the spectre of the Hasmoneans whom he always regarded—with much justification—as his rivals for the loyalties of the Jewish nation. He was zealous to the point of paranoia in assassinating all vestiges of the Hasmonean royal family, including his beloved wife Mariamne. In light of these facts it seems impossible to imagine how anyone, even an ignorant Roman satirist, could confuse Hanukkah with a “Day of Herod.”

Nevertheless, there are a number of circumstances that might indicate a tangible connection between Herod and Hanukkah. Some argue that the despot instituted a new celebration precisely in order to eclipse the more modest achievement of his Hasmonean predecessors who had rededicated the Temple after its defilement—but unlike Herod, had done nothing to enhance the relatively modest edifice inherited from Ezra and Nehemiah.

Like the Hasmoneans, Herod celebrated the completion of his Temple with a joyous dedication festival at which countless offerings were sacrificed. In recounting this event, Josephus commented on the auspicious correspondence of events, that the completion of the Temple’s construction coincided with the anniversary of the beginning of Herod’s reign.

Although Josephus does not provide us with the precise date, he records elsewhere that Herod was officially appointed King of Judea by Antony and the Roman Senate in the middle of winter 40 B.C.E. Given that it was on the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, the day before Hanukkah, that the prophet Haggai announced the establishment of the second Temple, we may note how convenient it would have been for Herod to link his own crowning achievement to that auspicious date.

This has led some scholars to speculate that, rather than attempting to suppress Hanukkah as a subversive outpouring of pro-Hasmonean sympathies, Herod instead chose to appropriate it by redirecting it to a commemoration of his own accomplishments. Accordingly, the transformed festival was so strongly associated with his reinterpretation that it came to be known in some circles as “Herod’s Day.” (Prior to this time, the sources state that Hanukkah was celebrated in a manner analogous to Sukkot, with the waving of palm-fronds expressing


the victory over their enemies.)

As it happens, light and fire festivals were celebrated during this season in the Roman empire. After all, the winter solstice marks the turning point at which the daylight hours cease diminishing and the days begin to lengthen. This occasion was celebrated as the birthday of the sun god, and the lighting of lamps or tapers was a common feature of those rituals. If we bear in mind Herod’s well-known sympathies for Rome and its culture, it is fully consistent with his character and policy that he would try to encourage the Jews to observe a winter festival like those that were being observed by loyal Roman subjects throughout the empire.

While the Jewish lunar calendar could not include a date that would always coincide with the winter solstice, it is a convenient coincidence that the solstice occurs on December 25 of the Julian solar calendar and Hanukkah begins on the 25th of the lunar month Kislev. Similar patterns were discernible in other Roman provinces, as local winter festivals were reinterpreted to correspond with the official birthday of the solar deity, and the lighting of fires or candles was incorporated into the festivities. The progressive strengthening of the light, which we emulate when we increase the numbers of the candles each night, is consistent with the themes of the Roman rituals honouring the prevailing of light over darkness.

And so, in the interest of cultural pluralism, let us extend our warmest season’s greetings to devotees of the ancient despot as they gather in the smoky aura of their “Herod Day” lamps.

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